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ACTION WHA-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	ITCE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXME-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00
	FBO-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	MMP-00	NSAE-00	OES-01
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	SCT-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	FMP-00	DSCC-00	LBA-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/006W					

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O 202234Z APR 01  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1051  
INFO USDOC WASHDC  
DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
NSC WASHDC

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STATE FOR WHA/AND, WHA/ESPC, DS/DSS/OSAC, DS/DSS/ITA  
AND DS/OP/WHA  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR DMORENESE  
STATE PASS EXIMBANK FOR AMERICAS DIVISION  
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COMMERCE FOR 4331/IEP/OLA/AND/JANGLIN AND FOR  
3134/USFCS/IOI/WH/DLUTTER  
ENERGY FOR GARY WARD AND ERIKA BENSEN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PTER, PINR, EPET, ENRG, ECON, KPRP, ASEC, CO  
SUBJECT: OXY CONTRACTORS RELEASED/ELN SUSPENDS TALKS

REF: BOGOTA 3466

1. (U) LOCAL OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM (OXY) REPS CONFIRMED  
THE SUCCESSFUL RELEASE OF ALL THE REMAINING HOSTAGES

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(34) FROM ELN CUSTODY ON APRIL 19. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE RED CROSS CONDUCTED THE NEGOTIATIONS AND RECEIVED THE WORKERS AT 4:00 PM LOCAL TIME. ELN STATEMENTS ISSUED DURING THE KIDNAPPING FOCUSED ON OXY'S "ROBBING THE EARTH" AND INVADING INDIGENOUS TERRITORY (U'WAS) AND DEMANDED OXY AND ECOPETROL MEET WITH LOCAL ELN REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS HOW TO REDRESS THESE LOSSES. NEITHER OXY NOR ECOPETROL AGREED TO THESE DEMANDS FOR A MEETING IN ORDER TO SECURE THIS RELEASE.

2. (U) SEPARATELY, ON APRIL 19, ELN COMMANDER "PABLO BELTRAN" DECLARED THAT THE ELN WILL INDEFINITELY SUSPEND ALL PEACE TALKS WITH THE GOC IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT PASTRANA'S APRIL 17 STATEMENT THAT THE GOC WOULD CONSIDER CONTINUING PEACE TALKS OUTSIDE COLOMBIA. THE ELN INTERPRETED PASTRANA'S OFF-THE-CUFF COMMENTS AS A WEAKENING IN THE GOC'S DETERMINATION TO SECURE THE SOUTHERN BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT OR TO MEET THE ELN'S ON-

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GOING DEMAND THAT THE COLOMBIAN ARMY DRIVE THE  
PARAMILITARIES OUT OF THE ZONE.

3. (U) COMMENT: THE QUICKNESS OF THE HOSTAGE RELEASE (100 ON THE FIRST DAY, THE REST ONLY 4 DAYS LATER) AND THE LACK OF FINANCIAL DEMANDS CONFIRMS THAT THIS WAS A POLITICAL MOVE AIMED AT RETURNING GOC ATTENTION TO THE PEACE TALKS WITH THE ELN. THE DIFFICULTIES THE GOC HAS ENCOUNTERED IN ESTABLISHING A DEMILITARIZED ZONE FOR THE ELN IN SOUTHERN BOLIVAR, AND ELN REFUSALS TO NEGOTIATE OUTSIDE OF COLOMBIA HAVE BROUGHT THIS PEACE PROCESS TO A STAND-STILL. BOTH OXY AND MINISTRY OF ENERGY REPS SEE THIS MASS KIDNAPPING AS AN ATTENTION GRABBING PLOY TO REMIND THE GOC THAT THE ELN, THOUGH WEAKENED MILITARILY, CAN STILL INFLECT SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE ON THE COUNTRY'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHERWISE CREATE HAVOC FOR THE GOC.

PATTERSON

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